

Alaska Department of Military & Veterans Affairs

Nearly 4,500 Alaskans are directly involved with today's Alaska Department of Military & Veterans Affairs. Most are members of the Army or Air National Guard—all are volunteers of one stripe or another.

The Department's stated mission is to "provide ready, relevant quality forces and services for Alaskans and the Nation." Day in and day out, this is exactly what the Guard does. It may possibly be one of the most effective and responsive agencies in government.



Official Photo: SSgt Cherie A. Thurlby

Brigadier General Stephen D. Korenek, Assistant Adjutant General, Alaska Army National Guard, looks out the window of an HH1-60 helicopter prior to door gunnery training.

Overview

More than 3,900 of the 4,500 employees and volunteers of the department are members of the Alaska Army National Guard or the Alaska Air National Guard. More than 2,600 participate as traditional or part-time members of the Guard. Some 250 members of the Alaska State Defense Force and 105 members of the Alaska Naval Militia

also contribute thousands of hours of volunteer time each year. There are facilities in 76 communities around the state.

The department has an annual budget of more than \$160 million. That money pays the salaries of Guard members, the Division of Emergency Services and other State employees through Federal/State matching fund arrangements.



More than a job, the Guard is a way of life. Today's citizen-soldiers and airmen serve our nation and Alaska with unparalleled professionalism. Guard members bring knowledge and experiences gained in civilian life to the various units. Guard members return to homes and workplaces with new leadership skills and new insights

ready to accomplish national security and global military objectives.

Fully equipped and funded, the Guard can continue to honor its commitment to respond to our state in times of need.

The Guard has three missions: federal, state and domestic. The first mission brings focus to our national interests—a force for national defense,

times of international crises.

The Guard's international role continues to expand. We've deployed soldiers and airmen to Europe, Central America, Asia, and across the Pacific Rim. Alaska's National Guard maintains a balanced force capable of performing many of the missions across the national security spectrum. Alaska's Guard units have deployed to

Alaska National Guard

to build solid families, better businesses and stronger communities.

The Guard has two distinct roles—federal and state. Both roles are embraced with enthusiasm and energy.

The vision is clear and direct: The Alaska Army and Air National Guard aspire to be the most ready reserve components in the world, expertly led, highly trained and equipped, and

peacekeeping and promoting democratic values. Global security is included in this mission.

The Alaska Army and Air National Guard have combat-ready forces poised to respond in times of need. Serving side by side with regular forces in military operations around the world, Alaska's citizen-soldiers and airmen are capable of conducting wartime and peacekeeping missions in

Operation Desert Storm, Haiti, Rwanda, Somalia, Bosnia, Turkey, Korea and other hotspots. The Alaska Army and Air Guard have also worked with partner nations like Mongolia, Russia and Bangladesh to promote civil and military relations, military effectiveness, and humanitarian efforts. Guard members apply both civilian and military skills to whatever task is at hand.



Official Photo: Ssgt Cohen A. Young

Alaska Firefighters load a simulated bomb victim on to an Army UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter from the 207th Air National Guard, AK, as part of Exercise Northern Edge.



Global Security

On a national level, the Army National Guard comprises more than half of available Army Combat Forces and one-third of our combat service and combat service support forces. The Guard accounts for 57 percent of combat forces, 32 percent of combat service and 36 percent of combat service support.

The Army National Guard provides 34 percent of the Army's total strength on less than 10 percent of the Army's Budget—training to the same standards as the U.S. Army and the U.S. Air Force. All Guard units are as ready as they are resourced to be.

Across the nation, the Army Guard has 367,000 soldiers in 2,700 communities. The Guard operates 3,160 owned and 62 leased armories to support training, aviation, administration and logistics throughout the United States. The Air Guard is 109,000 strong, serving in 88 major flying units and at more than 170 installations.

Here at home, the Alaska Army National Guard has 2,000 authorized soldiers. Most serve with the 207th Infantry Group (Scout) and its subordinate units and elements. Army Guard units are located in 76 communities across the state, with battalion headquarters in Nome, Bethel, Wasilla, Juneau and Camp Denali.

The Alaska Air National Guard has more than 2,200 members located in two major Wings—the 176th Wing at Kulis Air National Guard Base and the 168th Air Refueling Wing at Eielson Air Force Base. In addition, the headquarters of the Alaska Air Guard and the Rescue Coordination Center are both located at Camp Denali (on Ft. Richardson). The 206th Combat Communications Squadron and the 611th Air Control Squadron are located at Elmendorf Air Force Base. The operations tempo for all Alaska Air Guard flying units is equal to or greater than our active-duty counterparts.

Neighbors Helping Neighbors

Virtually every week of the year, the Alaska National Guard responds to calls for help somewhere in the state. Answering to the Governor, it is the Guard's mission to provide rescue and recovery support to people in trouble. Last year, with the help of friends and neighbors, the Guard rescued more than 150 people. The Guard is always ready

when neighbors need help.

When it comes to disasters, such as floods, urban wildfires, winter storms, sea storms, and the like, Guard members readily blend with civil authorities—like the Alaska Division of Emergency Services—to apply expertise in transportation, logistics, medical, security, communication and other support.





Photo: SSgt Cherie A. Thurlby

Members of the Alaska Army National Guard's 207th Aviation Battalion, Ft. Richardson, walk out to their HH-60 helicopter at Ft. Greely.





Adding Value to America

The Guard is “Hometown Alaska,” with roots intertwined in the tundra of every village—soldiers and airmen across the state conduct counter-drug programs, youth programs, provide health care, and perform other public service. These volunteer efforts focus the talents of the Guard and foster values that strengthen Alaska and our nation.

Youth programs include the Alaska Military Youth Academy ChalLeNGe Program, Boy Scouting and Junior ROTC programs, among many others, which focus Guard talents on local communities. Guard members voluntarily apply a

multitude of skills to the mission, including mentoring, linguistic support and public speaking. Guard members promote values that strengthen Alaska.

The anti-drug efforts of the Guard are obvious and important to Alaska. Last year, Alaska National Guard soldiers assisted local, state and federal law enforcement officials in the seizure of cocaine, marijuana plants, and processed marijuana—removing millions of dollars of illegal, illicit drugs from the streets. Law-enforcement officials made more than 100 arrests, confiscated weapons and vehicles, and

seized tens of thousands of dollars in cash.

Likewise, the efforts to reduce drug demand are making an impressive impact through the numbers of youth and adults who are involved annually in community and schools programs. This past year, more than 100,000 youngsters and adults took part in this program, which underscores the enduring link of the Guard's commitment to support the Alaska Federation of Natives' Sobriety Movement across the state. Embracing healthy lifestyles, enjoying vigorous sports and activities adds value to our youth and their families.



When It's Needed, The Guard Is There

The world remains a restless place. The Guard's roles and missions of the 21st Century continue to resonate with the passion of defending our country and responding to the needs of our neighbors. Fully equipped and funded, the Guard will remain a balanced force, always ready to perform our federal, state, and domestic missions.

Our nation faces many challenges, including the threat of terrorism. Today's Guard members make significant contributions to terrorism-prevention and recovery missions.

The increasing value the Alaska National Guard can add to the information warfare arena has unique parallels to the citizen-soldiers of colonial times. Minutemen marched with civilian skills that led to victory in marksmanship, knowledge of the terrain and rugged individualism. Today's member is the same physically fit warrior, yet with added new information skills. Computer experts, who work on the cutting edge of civilian information technology, come to the Guard armed



Official Photo: SSgt Cherie A. Thurlby

Staff Sgt. David R. Cochran, a crew chief with the Alaska Army National Guard, ties down the rotor blades of an HH-60 helicopter at Eielson Air Force Base, Alaska.

with advanced skills critical to protecting our nation's flow of information.

As an institution, the Alaska Department of Military & Veterans Affairs is committed to mirroring the people and

values of our state. The Guard shares in the success of our nation, and is ready, willing and able to defend our freedom. Guard members are proud to be neighbors helping neighbors.

A Vision of the Future

The challenge of Missile Defense beckons Guard soldiers with the opportunity to provide a new and demanding homeland defense service for our nation. The mission is well suited for Alaskans. During this past year, Gov. Tony Knowles and the Alaska Legislature authorized the creation the position of Assistant Adjutant General, Space & Missile Defense. This new position, the first of its kind in the nation, will allow for an improved transition and coordination of state and federal resources in developing the infrastructure to support America's missile defense program while also paying attention to the scientific and commercial development of spaceports in Alaska.

The Alaska Army National Guard, which is considered to be the organization that will operate the missile defense in Alaska, is already considering the types of soldiers it will need to fill a

"cyber-warrior" battalion.

Army Guard aviators are acquiring modified combat search and rescue models of the UH-60L Blackhawk, which are equipped with hoists and forward-looking infrared, designed to improve the routinely carried out search and rescue missions routinely accomplished in western and southeast Alaska.

This past year, the Alaska Air Guard began its first steps in assuming full operational activities of the Regional Air Operations Center (611th Air Control Squadron) at Elmendorf AFB. It will take three more years to accomplish the complete transition.

The Air Guard, with support of the National Guard Bureau, continues to consider taking on the long-range Space Surveillance at Clear AF Station. As of this writing, Air Force Space Command is reviewing the plan.

Discussions of the possible



Official Photo: SSgt Cohen A. Young

Lt. Franklin L. Briggs of 1st Battalion, 207th Aviation Regiment, AK, explains the control system of a Blackhawk helicopter to 10-year-old, William Kelly.

assignment of the C-17 Globemaster strategic Airlifter aircraft continue to air.

